

EDUCATION

CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

- **Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK):** Every four-year old child must be provided a voluntary, free, and high quality pre-kindergarten learning opportunity.
- **Public Schools:** Adequate provision must be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools.
- **Class Size Reduction:** Adequate provision must be made by law for a sufficient number of classrooms to achieve class size reduction requirements by the 2010 school year.
- **Higher Education:** Adequate provision must be made by law for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of institutions of higher learning and other public education programs that the needs of the people may require.

EDUCATION GOVERNANCE

- **State Board of Education (SBE):** Supervises the system of free public education as provided by law.
- **School Districts & School Boards:** Each county constitutes a school district. An elected school board supervises all free public schools within the district and determines the rate of school district taxes. Each district has a superintendent who administers and manages the schools.
- **Board of Governors (BOG):** Operates, controls, and is fully responsible for the management of the State University System, subject to the powers of the Legislature to appropriate funds.
- **University Boards of Trustees:** Administer each state university according to powers and duties established by the BOG.
- **Florida College System Boards of Trustees:** Govern each Florida College System institution according to rules of the SBE.

SNAPSHOT OF EDUCATION IN FLORIDA

- 148,285 students participated in the 2009-10 school-year VPK program.
- 3,397 public schools served 2,504,335 students in K-12 and 412 charter schools served 137,260 students in K-12 in 2009-10.
- 11 State University System institutions served 366,597 students and 28 Florida College System institutions served 907,753 students through July of this academic year.

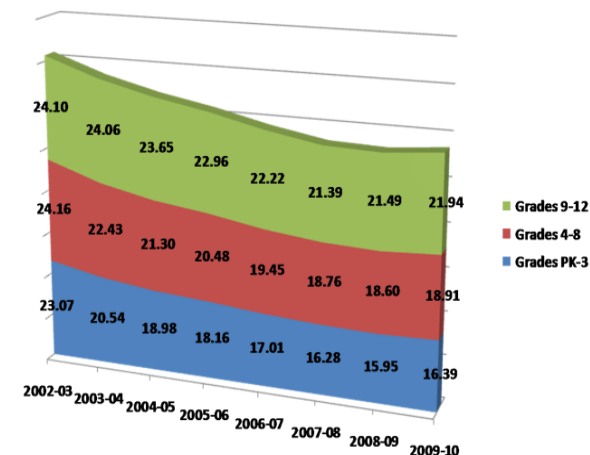
15 YEARS OF REFORM: 1995-2010

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| 1995 | •Public schools are graded for the first time based on student achievement. |
| 1996 | •Charter schools created as independent public schools. FCAT developed to measure student achievement. |
| 1997 | •Florida Virtual School created for grades 6-12. |
| 1998 | •Constitution revised to restructure the Board of Education as an appointed board and to make education the "paramount duty of the state." FCAT administered for the first time in grades 4, 5, 8, and 10. |
| 1999 | •A+ plan adopted, which established A-F school letter grades, eliminated social promotion for 3rd graders, expanded FCAT to grades 3-10, and created the School Recognition program. |
| 2001 | •Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarships created for low-income students. Community colleges authorized to offer baccalaureate degrees. |
| 2002 | •Class size, VPK, and BOG constitutional amendments adopted. |
| 2006 | •A++ plan adopted, which created a middle school core curriculum and required a 4th math credit for high school graduation. |
| 2008 | •High school grades expanded beyond the FCAT to include additional achievement measures. |
| 2010 | •High school graduation requirements expanded to include Biology I, Algebra 2, Chemistry or Physics, and another rigorous science course, phased in over a 3-year period, beginning in 2011-12. |

CLASS SIZE

PreK-12 class sizes have significantly declined since the 2002-03 school year:

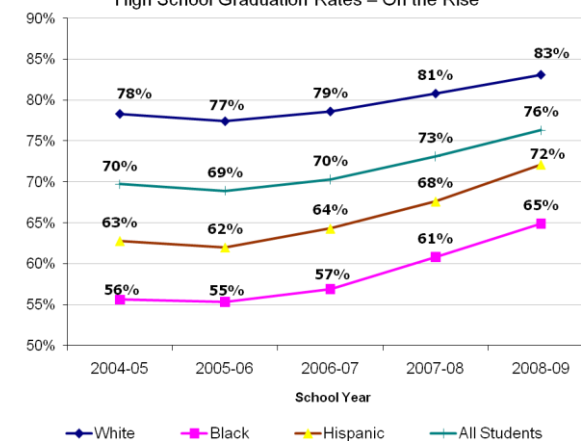
Class Sizes – On the Decline



HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

During the past five years, Florida's high school graduation rates have risen significantly:

High School Graduation Rates – On the Rise



Graduation rates calculated using National Governors Association methodology. 2009-10 graduation rates will not be available until November 2010.

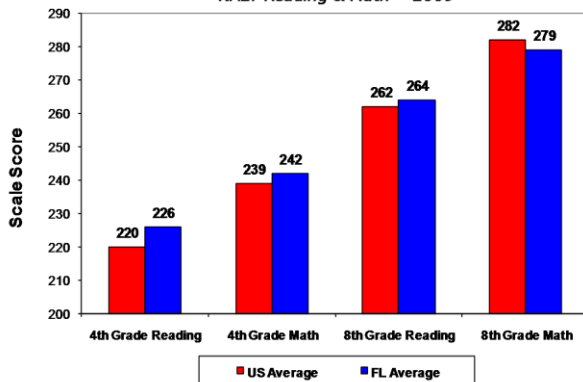
K-12 ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

- **School Grades:** Public schools, including charter schools, receive a grade of A, B, C, D, or F based primarily on student performance on the FCAT and End of Course (EOC) exams.

A high school's grade is based 50% on student FCAT/EOC scores and 50% on factors such as graduation rates and student participation and performance in accelerated courses.

- **NAEP:** In addition to the state accountability system, Florida participates in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), referred to as the "Nation's Report Card." Since 1998, Florida's scores have risen significantly from well below the national average:

Florida 4th & 8th Graders Compared to National Average
NAEP Reading & Math -- 2009



SCHOOL CHOICE

A variety of school choice options are available to parents and students, including:

- Florida Virtual School's online courses.
- Full-time virtual instruction programs offered by each school district.
- Charter schools.
- The McKay Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program.
- The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program.

POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Public postsecondary education in Florida is offered by State University System (SUS) and Florida College System (FCS) institutions and school district career centers.

- 11 state universities operating at 30 sites statewide comprise the SUS.
- 28 FCS institutions operating at 183 sites statewide comprise the FCS. As authorized by statute or the SBE, 18 FCS institutions award baccalaureate degrees.
- 45 school district career centers located in 29 school districts offer apprenticeships, remedial and adult general education, and career certificate programs.

UPCOMING ISSUES

- **Race to the Top:** Florida has been selected as one of 10 winners of Phase 2 of the competition. The state will receive \$700 million in federal funds to implement locally-developed, comprehensive education reform plans.
- **Class Size:** It may be necessary for the Legislature to address issues that arise from the outcome of the November election regarding the proposed constitutional class size amendment.
- **Individualized Career Paths for High School Graduates:** Pursuit of a 4-year degree may not be suitable for all students. It may be necessary to expand access to career counseling and less traditional educational pathways.
- **College Readiness:** More than 50% of 2008 high school graduates who entered the FCS required remediation prior to enrollment in college-level coursework. Strategies to address this issue may need to be considered.

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Florida House of Representatives

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